

# Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Fund



**Administered by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources**  
in partnership with the Natural Resources Districts and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



The **Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Fund**, established in 1977, provides state financial assistance to Nebraska landowners for the installation of **approved soil and water conservation measures** that improve water quality, conserve water, and help control erosion and sedimentation. Among the eligible practices for cost-share assistance are; terraces, terrace outlets (grassed or mechanical), irrigation reuse pits, grade stabilization structures, dams, diversions, grassed waterways, control basins, pasture and range seeding, planned grazing systems, irrigation water management and windbreaks and windbreak renovations.



The Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, which is a sixteen-member group with responsibilities relating to the **Department of Natural Resources** determines the list of eligible practices, establishes the operating procedures for the fund and annually allocates the funds among the **23 Natural Resources Districts** (NRDs). The **USDA Natural**



**Resources Conservation Service** provides the technical assistance needed in planning and installing the approved conservation measures. The Natural Resources Districts are responsible for the administration of the program at the local level including accepting applications from landowners, setting priorities, and working with the landowners and contractors to complete the practices and prepare the necessary documentation for submittal to the Department of Natural Resources.

## Cost-Share Programs

**Eligibility** for cost-share assistance is established when a cost-share application is submitted by the landowner and approved by the appropriate NRD. A technician (usually from the Natural Resources Conservation Service) provides the technical assistance and must also determine that the proposed practice is needed and practical before funds are obligated.

**Cost-share payment** (rates) cannot exceed 75% of either the average cost or actual costs, whichever is less. Individual NRDs often adopt a cost-share percentage of less than 75%, especially if the federal cost-share rate for the same type of practice is also less than 75%.

**Priority** of cost-share assistance can be based on the public benefits realized from that conservation practice(s). NRD directors may give preferences to the treatment of those lands or the installation of those approved practices which they determine will yield the greatest public benefit.

## Application Process

Individual landowners apply for cost-share assistance by filling out an application with the local NRD in which their property is located. The application lists the conservation practice(s) desired and provides an estimate of the amount of work required to complete the project. A technician must concur with the need(s), feasibility, and estimated quantities shown on the application. In an instance where more than one landowner is involved, a group of landowners may apply for assistance. If the proposed plans of the group are acceptable to the NRD, the landowners then make arrangements to carry out the project. A request for cost-share assistance is then filed with the local NRD by one of the landowners. Upon completion of the project, a payment claim, supported by cost verifications, is submitted to the NRD for approval. In either case, a technician oversees the project throughout the entire process. Payment of cost-share funds by the Department of Natural Resources is made only after the technician inspects the completed work, determines that all the specifications have been met, and certifies the completed quantities on which the payment is calculated.



## The Past and the Future

The conservation and proper utilization of Nebraska's invaluable water and soil resources is a task that is rooted in the state's past and one that is vital to the state's future. Nebraska's diverse natural resources are the foundation to the state's future and provide the basis for agricultural and economic development. It is important that these resources are managed in



the best interest of the state's residents to maintain and improve the quality of the "Good Life". The **Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Fund** brings together the needs of private citizens with the resources of the state in an attempt to ensure a properly managed future.

For additional information about the **Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Fund** contact your local **Natural Resources District** or the **Nebraska Department of Natural Resources**  
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